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HISTORY OF SHELBY COUNTY

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1937

History Department

of

Alabama College

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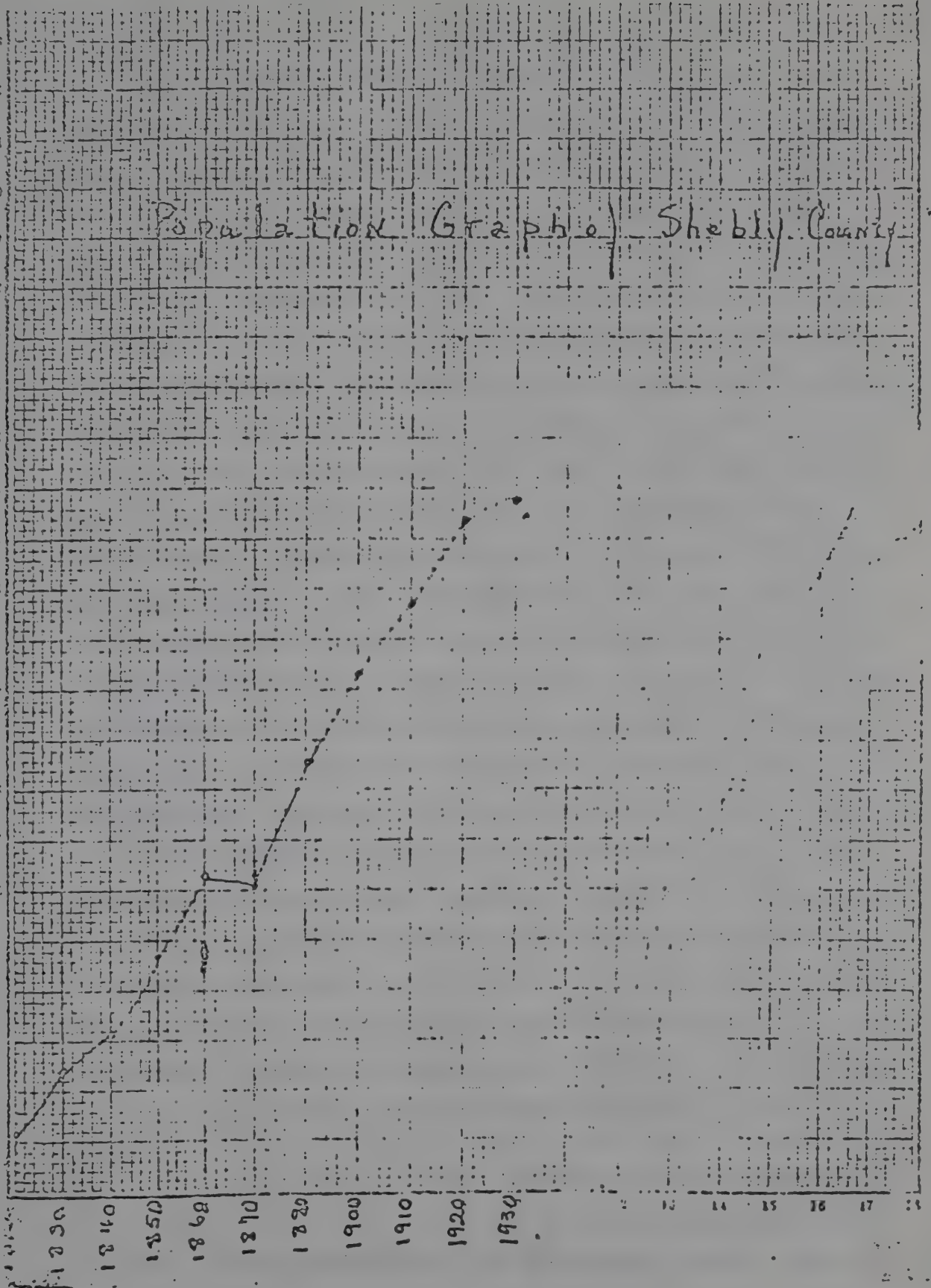
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Shelby County with an area of 819 square miles is located in the center of Alabama. In the Randall cemetery about two miles from Montevallo may be found a marker showing that the cemetery is the center of Alabama. Shelby County is bounded on the North by Jefferson and St. Clair Counties, on the South by Chilton and Bibb and on the West by Talladega County. The elevation of the county ranges from 600 feet in the valleys to 1,200 feet above sea level in the mountain sections. The surface of the land is generally hilly and rough. In The Northern and North Eastern sections the land is mountainous, the Eastern section rolling to hilly while the Southern part is hilly to broken. About one half of the area of Shelby County is included in the Mineral Belt. The Cahaba coal field lies in the Northern section while in the central portion you have the Coosa coal fields. Minerals other than coal found in the county are iron, granite, limestone, slate, higher grade clay for bricks and great chert deposits for use on roads. The lower lands and bottom lands are quite fertile while the higher lands are of an inferior grade. This county is a well watered county having within its boundaries the Coosa and Cahaba Rivers with their numerous tributaries. Some of these tributaries are the Buxachatchee, Waxahatchee, Beeswax, Four Mile, Yellow Leaf, Kellys Shoal and Valley Creek. Along these creeks are to be found the most fertile land in Shelby County. Most of the forests have been cut in Shelby County. The trees which grow here are the long and short leaf pine, hickory, oak, chestnut, and mulberry. ⁽¹⁾ Today we still find saw mills cutting the pines. A few lines from a Shelby County weekly newspaper shows how the county appears to a poetic journalist, "streams, waterfalls, forests, gorges and mountains standing out as a great painting while the Southern breeze sprays all with a sweet fragrance of myriads of wild flowers the year round. Shelby County is a cozy nook in nature's conservatory where the trees take on their

(1) Owens - History of Alabama, Vol. II, Chicago 1921, p. 1242

Population Graph of Shelby County



greenest garb, where the mountains are the most rugged and picturesque, where the flowers are the most dainty in coloring, and their aroma the very sweetest."⁽²⁾

Shelby County and her twin county, Cahaba (Bibb), were established by an act of the Legislature on February 17, 1818. In the beginning Shelby County extended from Dallas County to Rome, Georgia. When the county was really established its boundaries were Wills Creek on the North and the Southern boundary was the township line North of Columbiana. It was nominally a part of Montgomery County. This territory had been included in the Creek cession of Fort Jackson, August 9, 1814. The original Shelby County has been carved up to make St. Clair County and slices have been taken from her since to make up Jefferson, Talladega, Baker (Chilton) and Bibb Counties. The name Shelby was give this county in honor of Isaac Shelby, the first governor of Kentucky. Isaac Shelby, a Marylander, moved to North Carolina in 1776. He lead a regiment of the colonies forces at Kings Mountains. After America's independence he declined the offer of minister of war and died in 1826.⁽³⁾

No Indian village appears recorded on any ancient French or English maps within what is now the territory included in Shelby County. It seems logical however to assume that if there were Creek villages on the East of Coosa River there would be villages on the West. After the treaty of Fort Jackson in 1814 all the Indians had to cross over the river so there must have been Indians. All the Indians on the West of the river were to go to the East so as to be in the Reservation.⁽⁴⁾ Another evidence to show that Indians peopled this region is that the early white settler found many wild horses and cattle in the mountains. Although Shelby was West of the Creek boundary lines the

(2) "The Sentinel" - J. A. MacKnight - Editor - Meroney papers

(3) Birmingham News, December 22, 1922

(4) Owens - History of Alabama Vol. III, Chicago 1921, p. 1242

descriptions of settlements seem to be recognizable as Shelby County places. The Tanape is thought to be on Yellow Leaf Creek, Ta'lua Hadsho or "Crazy Town" is on Cahaba River. Along Coosa River on both sides are found flint and stone objects. East of Siluria about one mile is a stone heap showing of original indications. Many arrow heads and bits of pottery are found along Shoal Creek in Montevallo. Tradition tells of a famous playground which the Indians periodically visited and celebrated. The location is said to be about three miles from Montevallo on the old Deson place. In the year 1837 Shelby County saw the departure of a large portion of the Indians who were hostile to the whites. They were principally the Muscogeas, the Seminoles whose largest settlements were along the Tallapoosa River. Shelby County was bothered mostly by wandering groups of these Indians. These Indians were ever ready for a fight with the white and their Indian Allies. After their departure no more did the people of Shelby County quiver with fear at the word that the Indians were coming and to run for their lives. Indians still lived in Shelby County but for the most part they were quiet and lived more the life of the white man. Evidences still remain in Shelby County of the Indians who used to roam this land. Near Blue Springs on the Gardner farm there is an old burying ground of the Indians. The cemetery has been in cultivation for many years but still people dig up relics of the Indians' life. (5)

Emigrants are believed to have moved into Shelby County immediately following the Creek Indian War. In 1814 or 1815 Joseph Ray, from Tennessee who had served with General Andrew Jackson in the Indian wars came into Shelby County. (6) He moved his household goods on pack horses. Ray followed the Indian Trail that led from Ditto's Landing to Mud Town on Cahaba River. He settled in the Cahaba Valley and stayed for several years. Later he

(5) Mr. Shaw from Chelsea

(6) Owens - Alabama History, Vol. III, p. 1243

moved into the Eastern section of the county where he assisted in organizing the Big Spring Baptist Church at Harpersville. In the same year (1814) Jesse Wilson and his family had a corn crop on an old Indian clearing which was later to be known as Montevallo. Wilson had been another follower of Jackson who along with Benjamin Wilson came to the county. Benjamin Wilson was perhaps the original settler of Ebenezer. Edmund King, who came over from Georgia in 1817 joined the Wilson's in Montevallo. At first Mr. King settled between Aldrich and Montevallo probably where Almont is today. Today the King Negroes in Almont say that their grandparents were slaves of the old King family. Edmund King made his permanent resident however in Montevallo. He built his home on a commanding site upon a little hill. The land which King purchased was bought from the government and from the Indians. The Indians were a band of the Cherokee Indians and the Indians were life long friends of King's. Weatherford, the Cherokee Chief, agreed to act as guide for him in bringing his family to Wilson Hill. The history of his home "Mansion House" or "King's House" is a familiar one. The house was the first brick house built in Shelby County and had the first glass window in the state. The bricks were made from clay along the banks of Shoal Creek by the slaves of Kings. Enough bricks were made by the servants to build another house in Ebenezer which was known as the Harless house. This house of the Harlesses has been destroyed but King's House still stands as a historical landmark of Shelby County. The house was originally a two story, rectangular shaped building. Mr. King was a very outstanding religious figure in the settlement. His home was a refuge for orphan boys. French Nabors was one of the boys who came from his fathers' plantation "Piedmont" to stay with Edmund King. The Nabors later took over the King home and lived for several years. One night a visitor came to the Nabors' seeking shelter. The wayfarer was Aaron Burr. The family was charmed by the man and his friendly kind ways.

That night a child was born to the Nabors and they called the young son Aaron Burr. The Nabors deeded the house to the college. The building has been used by the college as an Infirmary, Home Economics building, Sociology department and today it is used by the Psychology department.

Montevallo remained for several years as Wilson Hill named in honor of the first settlers. The name was changed to Montevallo which means "little mount in a valley". This meaning is usually given to the word but it is not known for sure why the name Montevallo was given. ⁽⁷⁾

Montevallo was once the market for the products of Tuscaloosa, Jefferson, Blount, Walker, St. Clair and even Calhoun Counties. Stage and caravan lines radiated in all directions. Business flourished in the little village. Belles of old Elyton made Montevallo their shopping place. Maroney of Tennessee, Storrs of Vermont, Butlers and Lymans of Connecticut, McConaughys of Delaware and Steels from Lake Champlain operated thriving merchantile business in Montevallo. Some of the old roads coming into Montevallo connected her with all the largest towns of the section. The Elyton-Montevallo road, the Montgomery road, Maplesville to Selma road, and Tuscaloosa road were some of them. ⁽⁸⁾ Many of these are followed in the construction of our modern roads. The old Tuscaloosa is farther from the path of travel than most of them. Practically all the old houses that seem to be sitting off on a little side road once was on a main thoroughfare. Railroads were built at an early date for Montevallo. In 1853 the Alabama and Tennessee Railroad reached Montevallo from Selma. Montevallo had a big barbecue and celebration when the first train arrived. Said one old man of sixty years who walked around the trail several times, "God's Conventions were great but man's are much greater". Montevallo remained the northern terminal for many years which caused her to grow. This same railroad later became the Selma, Rome and Dalton Railroad. ⁽⁹⁾ At a still later date it became the Southern.

(7) Historic Homes - p. 250-252

(8) Birmingham News, August 23, 1931

In 1875 there was a cyclone in Montevallo which destroyed much valueable property. By 1878 several new houses were built back and times were a little better. Even at this early date Montevallo was depending on coal mining to a great extent for cash.

The people of Montevallo seem to have been deeply religious. In the Lyman Letters there is a great deal of discussion of Sunday School, preaching and moral questions. The first church established in Montevallo was the Methodist. It was organized in 1818. Mr. E. B. Hearne was the first minister. In 1911 the present Methodist Church was erected. The Baptist in 1856 established a church, the Presbyterians in 1897 and the Episcopal in 1874. The Episcopal Church was destroyed by the cyclone in 1874. (10)

The first public school of Montevallo was erected on Shoal Creek, and was called Cedar Grove. In 1851 a joint stock company started a school in the house which the Lymans own today. Mr. W. H. Meredith was the first teacher. The school was known as the Male Institution. The Presbyterians organized a male and female school but it was closed during the Civil War. Dr. Howard Griggs bought and kept up this old school until state schools for women started. In 1906 a small wooden structure behind the Public School was the public school. J. W. Ellenburg was the first teacher. In 1915 the new public school building was constructed. (11)

In 1892 through the efforts of Sol D. Bloch an appropriation of \$15,000 was made by the Legislature to found a Girls Industrial School. Governor Oates should appoint the trustees and they in turn were to choose the site of the school by 1895. Montevallo was one of fifteen places considered. Reasons for Montevallo selection were because of the beauty and fertility of the locality, high moral tone of people, magnificent springs furnishing plenty of water, geographical location and Shelby County agreed to raise five thousand dollars. Miss Julia Tutwiler was appointed president but resigned before any work was done. Captain (10) Meroney Papers

Henry Reynolds was president in 1896. In September the school opened with one hundred and twenty-five students. Rev. Dr. Francis M. Peterson was the second president. Dr. T. W. Palmer and Dr. O. C. Carmichael were presidents of the institution. Dr. A. F. Harman is the present president and T. H. Napier is the dean. The buildings on the campus are; Reynolds Hall (1851), which was used during the War as a camp and hospital for the soldiers. Reynolds was enlarged in 1899, Infirmary (Peterson Hall) in 1914, Block Hall 1915, Music (Calkins Hall) 1917, Library 1924, Ramey 1926, Hanson 1929. There are about eight hundred and fifty girls enrolled in Alabama College which was made a four year accredited College in 1926. Montevallo to many people means only one thing, Alabama College.

Other settlements were being made at the same time around what is now Harpersville and Wilsonville. The first settler at Wilsonville was Dr. Elisha Wilson. Wilsonville was named in honor of Dr. Wilson. Other settlers along with Wilson were Henry Brasher, Thomas Hawkins, Daniel McLeod and Benjamin Hawkins. By 1821 settlers were leaving Wilsonville and Harpersville going to Columbiana to settle. James Howard was the first to get a title to his land in 1821. William Atkin came next as a settler about 1824. Leonard Tarrant who had been a teacher for some years at a place called Pitts Springs near Wilsonville, became a land owner in Columbiana in 1826. In that year also came Jesse Roberts, Lemuel Moore and Jesse Roach, as settlers of Columbiana. David and George Mason of Tennessee settled between Columbiana and Shelby. ⁽¹³⁾

One of these early settlers of Columbiana deserves special mention, Leonard Tarrant. Tarrant, a Whig, was appointed by Andrew Jackson as a Certifying Agent for the Indians. Jackson said, "Every agent I have commissioned had disappointed me except one and he is a Methodist preacher". The Methodist preacher was Leonard Tarrant. Tarrant was not only an Indian agent, for he was a wide awake legislator, administrator, judge, minister and poet. ⁽¹⁴⁾

Another settler of note in Columbiana was Dr. Carter Roberts. Roberts was a practicing physician and a brother of a famous Texas lawyer. He was reared in St. Clair county. Dr. Roberts was by no means poor having been fortunate in marrying into a wealthy family of Bridges. Mr. Bridges had been very generous in turning over his money to Dr. Roberts on the condition that Roberts would care for him in his old age and furnish all the whisky he wanted. ⁽¹⁵⁾

- David Owens was one of the early pioneers of Columbiana. He established
- (13) Birmingham News, December 17, 1922
 - (14) Birmingham News, December 17, 1922
 - (15) Columbiana Sentinel

the first tavern in the town. Mr. Owen had some rather bad habits, one of which was lingering too long over the wine bowl. Finally Mr. Owen was killed in an argument with a blacksmith, Mr. McCullena. David Owen seemed to have a great deal of the traditional wild west pioneer blood. ⁽¹⁶⁾

There are several versions as to Columbiana's old name of "Coon Town". The version which is most generally accepted is given here. Mr. Henry Brasher lived on a place near the Four Mile Creek. Mrs. Brasher was washing one day and went to a pond to rise her clothes. Her baby let out a terrified scream. Mrs. Brasher ran to the child and found that a coon had attacked the child. In fighting the coon away from the baby the mother was scratched and bruised. After this little incident the settlement was called "Coon Town" or "Coonsboro". When the people of the settlement decided to change the name of their town, they decided that the patriotic thing to do was to call it Columbia. This *no date* name was sent to Washington but already there was a Columbia, Alabama so not to be knocked out of all their plans the town was called Columbiana. ⁽¹⁷⁾

Columbiana which is today the present county seat was not the first county seat of Shelby. On April 17, 1818 less than three months after the establishment of Shelby County there was organized at William S. Wallace's a County Court. George Phillips was the chief justice with Thomas Rodgers, Bennett Ware and Patrick Hays as justices. Rodgers and Phillips represented Shelby County in Constitutional Convention. Shelbyville extending along Cahaba Valley, was named as the County Seat. ⁽¹⁸⁾ The courthouse was at Shelbyville (near the present site of Pelham). First court house was constructed for \$53.00 by Thomas Rodgers. The plans called for a house 24 feet long, 20 feet wide and 8 feet to the eaves, clap board roof, lined and chinked and a door with a shutter. ⁽¹⁹⁾ Rodgers seems to have been a very versatile man. He was an outstanding lawyer

(16) Columbiana Sentinel

(17) Birmingham News, December 17, 1922

(18) Galloway

(19) Birmingham News, December 17, 1922 - Frank Barnett

as well as a contractor. He was deligated to the first Constitutional Convention at Huntsville, Secretary of first Senate, and first Secretary of State of Alabama.

✓ In 1825 the court house was to be moved. The hottest contestants for the privilege of having the court house were Montevallo and Columbiana. In those days it was the making of the town to have the court house located in its midst. The committee for the selection included David Neal, Job Masey, Benjamin Haslett, Ezekiel Henry, Henry Avery, James Franklin and Thomas Bee, Sr. In favor of Montevallo was its larger population. * Columbiana, however, was nearer the center of the county and she had the support of the thriving and thickly populated town of Wilsonville and Harpersville. Columbiana won the prize of the court house. (20) When the citizens of Columbiana heard the news there was great rejoicing. A tree where the present court house stands was bored full of holes which were filled with powder. This was set on fire. The tree was blown to splinters and the noise was heard for miles around. (21) At first a wooden structure was built as the court house. This building was used for 26 years. ✓ After the wooden building a brick house replaced it as the court house. This brick court house has been converted into a hotel and is still to be seen in Columbiana. The beautiful new marble court house was not built until 1905 while Judge A. B. Longshore was Probate Judge of the county. (22) Mr. B. C. Bynum was at the head of the company which constructed the new building. This company had also been the builders of the new jail of the county. There are many differences in the present jail and the first jail for the county after the court house was moved to Columbiana. The first jail which burned in a few years was built of white oak logs well hewn and fitted together. The jail of course was constructed with a double wall. Loflin Quinn was the contractor. The jail stood on the road to Shelby Springs. (23) Once a notorious old fellow by the name of Caldwell

(20) Birmingham News, December 17, 1922

(21) Columbiana Sentinel

(22) Galloway

(23) Columbiana Sentinel

who was continually getting into jail and out again was confined in this jail. He escaped from this jail by boring a hole with an auger. Nor was this the most dangerous of the old fellows escapades. Caldwell killed an Indian and was sentenced to be hanged on a public gallow. This site of the gallows was out from Columbiana toward Camp Branch. All the people had gathered around as we do today to witness a fair or a carnival. Caldwell was led to the gallows by the officers. He mounted the scaffold and after a long prayer everything was made ready for his execution. Just before the trap was sprung Esquire Moody came running to the scaffold and read to the people a reprieve from Governor Gayle. The Indians, about forty of them who had gathered to see the white man's revenge for murder were very disappointed and angry. Caldwell's friends were forced to surround and protect him from any violence which the Indians might be planning to do. ⁽²⁴⁾ Some of the sheriffs who have been responsible for keeping Shelby County a law abiding county are Hudson Nelson, John T. McCormick, Tod Wyatt, William R. Reeves, John Edmondson, Henry Sawyer, R. H. Brasher and Walton. These sheriffs cover the period from 1862-1886. ⁽²⁵⁾ The first Judge of the court after it was moved to Columbiana was Joab Lawler. Lawler was a very outstanding citizen of his day from 1821-1824 he was court clerk; in 1835 elected to United States Congress. Lawler was also a pastor of the Baptist Church. ⁽²⁶⁾ Other judges of note besides Lawler have helped rendering justice to Shelby County citizens. Among these are George Phillips (1818-1819), Thomas W. Smith (1819-1827), Leonard Tarrant (1827-1833), Wade Griffin (1834-1835), James Woodruff (1835-1841), Charles Gibbs (1841-1845), W. G. Bowden (1846-1849), John M. McCalahan (1849-1862), N. B. Mardis (1862-1869), James T. Leeper (1869-1888)

(24) Birmingham News, December 17, 1922

(25) Birmingham News, December 17, 1922

(26) Columbiana Sentinel (Meroney)

R. W. Cobb (1889-1892), D. R. McMillan (1895-1898), and J. P. Longshore (1898-1910).

It is always of interest to know the "first" of a place. In Columbiana the first teacher was Carter Roberts, the first doctors were David Owen and Jesse C. Roberts; the first merchants were Brasher Brothers, the Francis Genet, James and Charles Mandine. Other pioneer citizens after the Civil War were as merchants Durand and Nelson, and Leeper Brothers, Bruce Harris, Willis Walls and Parker and Armstrong were druggist. Physicians of Columbiana were Dr. W. S. Dubose and Dr. Hubbard. These lawyers must not be forgotten; Dr. McMillen, Alphonso Sterrett, Trice Castleberry and ex-governor Rufus W. Cobb.

Columbiana today is known foremost as the center of county court and government and as an agricultural town. At one time however Columbiana seemed destined to be an industrial center. During the Civil War after the fall of Cornith, Churchill and Co. moved its foundry, machine shop and black smith shop to Columbiana. This company was under contract to Confederate government to make legal and ten pound shells and parrot shells for Blakely guns up to one hundred and eighty pounds. A sample of their work may be seen around the Horace Ware lot in Columbiana Cemetery. The Company employed about seventy-five men. The wages ranged from one and one-half dollars to six payable in confederate money. In ¹⁸⁶⁵ 1855 during Wilson's raid the company's property was wiped from the map. A few years later Hamilton Biggs built a small foundry and manufactured stoves. Iron that went into the manufacture of the stoves was hauled by wagon from Shelby furnaces.

Columbiana today is a lovely town with its mixture of lawyers, teachers and other professionals with the agricultural people. It is probably a typical county seat with most of the people working directly or indirectly in the court house. The citizens are provided with an excellent water supply, the streets are paved and all in all it is quite modern. Through the hard work of her energetic Mayor, Harry Gordon. Columbiana has received some of the

benefits of the WPA for construction of hangar and airport. The beautiful marble court house is still the greatest pride to the people of Columbiana and of all Shelby County.

A settlement seven miles away has helped hold Montevallo down and kept her from growing. When the Louisville and Nashville railroad line was being surveyed through Shelby County, it was originally surveyed to pass through Montevallo. Montevallo citizens were opposed to the railroad because they felt that the railroad would cause a lowering of the morals of the people. Due to this opposition the railroad line was resurveyed and passed through Calera instead of Montevallo. Calera was settled in the early 1830's. The first settler of Calera was John R. Gamble. About 1848 several South Carolinians settled in Calera. The name Calera was given because of the large quantity of lime found there - "Calera" meaning lime in Spanish. Calera was important during the Civil War as a railroad center and crossing. Calera has remained the railroad center of Shelby County. The town is served by the Southern, Louisville and Nashville, and the Alabama Mineral railroad. Still Calera has a bountiful supply of lime. ⁽²¹⁾

Passing Calera and traveling toward Columbiana for about five miles you arrive at a beautiful group of springs. This spot is known as Shelby Springs. Everyone of the older generation can tell you of the good times they used to have at Shelby Springs. Getting off the train you were greeted by the music of a band which stayed at the Springs all the time. A great dancing pavilion was on the grounds and the music was wonderful. The hotel at the Springs was used primarily by people who were staying only a few days and had come to dance and have a big time. Cottages were occupied by those people who had come to profit from the body curing effects of the sulphur water. It was a great loss

(27) Columbiana "Sentinel" edited by MacKnight

(Meroney)

when the hotel burned. After the hotel burned Shelby Springs started a down hill slump. Even during and after the Civil War Shelby Springs served a great purpose. Confederate soldiers came to Shelby Springs to recuperate, through the use of the health giving waters, from illness and injuries. ⁽²⁸⁾ One man says of Shelby Springs, "Best place to go to enjoy oneself and rest. Ben is one of the best cooks in the country (chef at the hotel). The springs are gems of health in the form of red, white, yellow sulphur, iron and magnesia. There are no ants or mosquitoes and it is the grandest place to sleep I have ever known". About ten years ago several people came from Birmingham and attempted to revive Shelby Springs. It was to be a private venture for a Birmingham Club. The grounds were cleaned and golf links were soon made from an old pasture. A small pool was built. Soon they built a second pool and were going to turn the first pool into a basement for a hotel. These plans were never accomplished however. Today there is only a swimming pool and the springs left. The swimming pool has not been operated the past two years. Some how you can't feel that Shelby Springs or Yamakita, as it was christened by the Birmingham Club, will always be empty. It seems made for happy gatherings, picnics, dances, swimming and all the other gaities of life. ⁽²⁹⁾

From a site of pleasure we go to the town which is the home of the first coal mined in Alabama. Aldrich which is the home of Montevallo Coal Mining Company was first operated in 1855 by William P. Brown, a native of Pennsylvania. The mine was operated only to a limited extent until 1872. In 1859 Joseph Squire while in St. Louis, Missouri, heard of the coal that was to be found near

(28) Mrs. A. C. Galloway

(29) Sentinel, 1901 edited by MacKnight

Montevallo, Alabama. Says Mr. Squire, "When I arrived at the mines in 1859 I had on the best coat of broadcloth I dare say that was ever brought to Alabama. 'Twas the coat got me my first good partners". I had only two dollars and a half in my pocket. It was not I who brought the Capital into Alabama. No, it was not I. I left that to Aldrich and DeBardeleben. At the time when Mr. Squire came to Aldrich the mines were closed waiting for the arrival of the first steam engine and a pair of thirty-inch cylinder boilers. This was the first steam engine for hoisting coal from a slope or pit in Alabama. The mining property at the Montevallo mines was chiefly owned by the Alabama Coal Mining Company. The president of the company was Colonel John S. Storrs of Montevallo. The eastern part of the mines was owned by William P. Browne, Phil Weaver and Shelby Iron Co. The coal cost ten dollars per ton to mine. Squire took over part of the mines agreeing to get the coal out for \$2.12 one-half cents per ton. He had as partners Alexander Anderson and John Whitehead. The mines remained Alabama Mining Company until the Rev. I. T. Tehenor bought a controlling interest and changed the name to Montevallo Coal Mining Company. ⁽³⁰⁾ In 1872 Mr. Trueman Aldrich took over the company. Mr. Aldrich started the men to work in the summer time. This was an unheard of practice, but then the people felt you couldn't tell what a Yankee would do. He also started the practice of stacking coal in the summer for winter sells. Aldrich was successful in selling his coal and drove the English Coal off the Southern Coal Market. About 1875 Helena Mines were started and Trueman Aldrich feeling that his security was threatened leased his mine to Cornelius Cadle and William Farrington. Aldrich, his brother. ⁽³¹⁾ In 1882 the company was reorganized with Aldrich as president and

(30) Ethel Armes - The Story of Coal and Iron in Alabama
Birmingham, Alabama 1910, p. 153

(31) Ethel Armes - The Story of Coal and Iron in Alabama
Birmingham, Alabama 1910, p. 154-156

James L. McConoughy, Secretary. The Capital stock was \$300,000. A test made of the coal of the Montevallo Mine by the United States government showed that its evaporating power is higher than Pittsburg. The coal is used mostly for grate purposes. The Aldrichs prospered in Alabama. Mr. Aldrich built the beautiful home, "Rajah Lodge", in Aldrich. The house, now demolished, was at one time one of the show places of Shelby County. It was a beautiful house noted for its atmosphere of culture and hospitality. Carrington Hall which stands today is representative of the lavishness of the home. This hall was built first as a recreation hall for an adopted son, William Farrington Aldrich. It had a billiard room, reception room and dance hall. The building is now used by the Coal Company as the office. ⁽³²⁾ There still stands a few rooms of the old Aldrich house. Mr. Aldrich provided that Mr. Frost, a faithful employee should always remain in the Aldrich House. When the present company started tearing the building down, it was necessary for them to leave enough rooms for Mr. and Mrs. Frost. Mr. Frost still lives in this part and the old carriage shelter stands where Mrs. Aldrich must have alighted from her beautiful and famous carriage. It was always a special treat for the people when Mrs. Aldrich drove in her carriage driven by Mr. Marquis, who made his home in Aldrich until his death last year. Mrs. Aldrich was always bedecked with costly jewelry and gave the appearance of great wealth and royalty. The gardens and Rajah Lodge were filled with rare and beautiful trees and flowers. The fish pond was one of the centers of interest in the spacious gardens. Mr. William Farrington Aldrich, after taking over the mines and building Rajah Lodge, was a very active citizen politically as well as industrially. He served several terms in Congress as a representative of the Fourth Alabama District. Mr. Aldrich was a Republican

(32) J. A. MacKnight - Montevallo "A Little Bit of Lombardy"
Columbiana, 1907, p. 14

and was active in trying to line up Alabama in the Republican Column. (33)

After passing from the Aldrichs, the mines were owned by corporations. Mr. Peter Thomas was in charge of the mines several years. Later Mr. D. A. Thomas, the son of Peter Thomas, became the president of the corporation. The mine was for several years operated by convict labor. Aldrich mines were one of the last mines in Alabama to stop using convict labor. Several unique characters were associated with convict labor at Aldrich. One of the most interesting convicts was Harry Newton, a trusty. Mr. Newton had charge of the training of the bloodhounds kept at the prison camp. Harry, as he was affectionally known to all the children of the camp, was in prison because he had killed two men, one in self defense and another in revenge. He stayed at Aldrich until the convicts left the mines and then he was paroled and went to Texas to live with an old prison warden, Whirley. Today there are still negroes and one white man at the Aldrich mines who served terms in the mines as convicts and, after being freed, continued to work at Aldrich.

Recently, the old slope has been closed and a new slope has been opened about three miles toward Mayberry. The new slope is named Mary Elizabeth in honor of the daughter of Mr. Thomas, president of Montevallo Coal Company. Although the mine is very new, about three hundred tons is the average output per day. One hundred and eighty men are employed at the mines. Mr. J. B. Dollar is superintendent of the mines and has been for several years. The mining camp is a clean, well equipped mining town with a commissary and a general merchandise store operated by Shaws.

(33) J. A. MacKnight - Montevallo "A Little Bit of Lombardy"
Columbiana, 1907, p. 14

Another industry to be found in Aldrich is brick making. Montevallo Brick and Tile Company with Mr. L. E. Shaw as president operates the brick yard. The brick plant is of modern construction and well equipped. Face and common shale brick are the most extensively manufactured. An example of the brick may be seen in the drive ways and walk s of Alabama College in Montevallo. As a whole the brick plant has been a success with plenty of brick clay to continue operation here for many years. The plant is also conveniently located for transportation on the Southern railroad. (34)

Boothton is another mining camp founded at a later date than Aldrich. The town was originally called Booth town in honor of a Mr. Boothe who settled the land. Boothtown continues to exist as that part of Boothton lying across the Cahaba River. Later the settlement was called Blazing Stump probably because of its underlying coal seams. Boothton is just a shorter word for Booth Town. The mines are operated by the Southern Coal and Coke Company. Mr. George Peter is president of the company. The mine employs about three hundred men with a producing capacity of twelve hundred tons of coal per day. (35)

Dogwood is located about five miles from Montevallo. It, too, is a mining town. The mines are operated by the Little Gem Coal Company. Dogwood mines were opened in about 1917. The camp is called Dogwood while the post-office is Underwood. At one time the post-office was Dogwood but the post-office was killed, so in later years when the people desired another post-office, it was called Underwood.

A town which today is of very little importance but was a thriving industrial town for many years is Shelby. Shelby is the home of the Shelby

(34) Frank Willis Barnett - "Village Pivot of Early Operations"
Birmingham News, August 19, 1933

(35) Mrs. D. B. Dement - Boothton, Alabama

Iron Company. Mr. Horace Ware erected a small blast furnace in Shelby in the eighteen-forties. "The old stack, constructed of brick and rough stones, was located at the foot of an ore hill to save the costly hoisting. It was about thirty feet in height with three tuyere arches, and a front arch for cinder and metal opening. The hearth and cruceble were lined with sandstone, quarried twenty miles away and fireproof brick made of clay nearby. The daily capacity of the furnace was from four to six tons of strictly first class cold blast pig iron. The charcoal pits held about thirty cords of wood and after slow burning of ten to twelve days would yield about one thousand bushels of good furnace charcoal. The ore was mined with pick and shovel. One cubic yard of earth carried about one ton of mineral. The ore was delivered by one mule and a cart without a driver. Shelby was an ideal place for a furnace except for the distance to market and absence of means of transportation. All the pig iron not used in making hollow ware and various kinds of castings and sold in Shelby and neighboring counties, was hauled by wagon to Coosa River and boated on crude crafts to Montgomery and Prattville and by steamboat to Mobile. Furnace owners had little capital and cost of production was high.

For Ore	\$ 2.00
For Charcoal	10.00
For Limestone	.75
For Labor	3.00
For Repairs	<u>1.00</u>
Total	\$16.75

The product not shipped down the river was molded into hollow ware of many kinds; cooking utensils, heating and cooking stoves, dog irons, sash weights, boiling kettles, and cast plates. ⁽³⁶⁾

In 1854 under the guidance of Robert Thomas, a skilled and experienced English iron worker a farge was put up at Camp Branch and pig iron was

reduced to wrought blooms. The wrought product was sent to Sheffield, England where it was received well and made into steel knives, forks and razors. In 1861 this furnace had received the biggest order ever given to a furnace. The order was for one thousand tons at thirty-six dollars per ton. The order was filled in a years time.

Mr. Ware, in 1858-59, built a rolling mill in Alabama. On April 11th, 1860 he turned out the first day's product of finished bar iron in Alabama. "This was the beginning of an era in Alabama's history as an iron manufacturing state." From 1846 to 1862 the Shelby Iron Works were operated by Mr. Horace Ware, 1862-1867 by a group of stock holders including Mr. Ware, 1867-1890 by a company of Hartford Connecticut and Alabama; in 1890 a group of New Capitalists took over the Company. Colonel T. G. Bush of Birmingham in 1890 had supervision of the works. The Shelby Iron Works were destroyed during the Civil War. The furnaces and rolling mills furnished guns and armor plate for the Confederate Army. Wilson destroyed the furnace in his raid. After the war, the furnace resumed operation. (37)

The last of the old furnacemen who worked at Shelby died last year - Mr. Arnold Sturdivant who was a furnaceman at Shelby for about 25 years after the Civil War. During the Civil War slaves did most of the operation of the furnace. Many of these slaves, after they became free, continued to work at Shelby. Today some of the descendants of the slaves who worked here are living in Shelby.

Around 1920 Shelby Iron Works started gradually closing down. The once thriving little town saw its dwellers depart to Jefferson County and elsewhere. There remain about seventy-five houses in Shelby. Once in a while a company gets a little ore from Shelby and ships it but this doesn't seem to be profitable. Shelby is truly a deserted village. A former scene of thriving industrialism is being over grown with trees and briars.

Civil War Period in Shelby County

From 1850 to 1860 Shelby County was getting on her feet as an industrial county. The mines around Aldrich had just started their operation; at Shelby, Columbiana and Montevallo iron works were being operated. ⁽³⁸⁾ Shelby County was not yet a well developed county. Roads were just called roads without any pretense. "Taking the horse and buggy and going by ourselves we had a nice time, driving among gullies, and stumps and through creeks in our finery to visit a neighbor, Mr. Woods, five miles away." This was the condition of roads near Montevallo and the streets were no better as was shown by what was said of the streets, "I saw this morning's mail come splashing through the mud and prepared myself for unwelcome news". ⁽³⁹⁾

There were never very large plantations in Shelby County. Usually the size was six hundred and forty acres, a section of land. The number of slaves to be found on the plantation was about twenty. One slave holder, a Mr. Holley from South Carolina who settled on Beeswax Creek was more prosperous than his Carolina neighbor. He owned around one hundred slaves and had a regular slave village. Other slaves were forbidden by their masters to visit this slave quarter because of the character of the negroes. Holley was understood to be very wealthy. Most of his wealth however was invested in his slaves. After the Civil War, when his slaves were set free, he was left penniless. Upon his death his plantation was sold in strips by his children. Several acres of the land is owned by the Crumptions who have been in possession of it for several years.

One of Holley's neighbors was the Hortons who had come from South Carolina. They were never exactly prosperous having usually about fifteen slaves. The home which they erected of logs has been partly boarded and still stands today in the Kingdom Community. The side saddles which the girls used for riding

(38) Lyman Notes - Mrs. Mary McWilliams

(39) Lyman Papers

seventy years ago are in the attic. Spinning wheels, looms and much of the old furniture remains today. The home is not at all beautiful but it has an excellent location near a big spring and Little Beeswax Creek. The girls had always understood that water carried sound readily so during the war Sally and Ann would lie down to try to hear if the Yankees were coming. One day they did hear the guns roaring and they soon found out that the guns were not far away. In fact they were between their home and Columbiana. In the Horton settlement, as it is known locally, there is an old tan yard site which was owned and operated by the Edwards. The leather tanned here was sold to the people in the neighborhood who used it to make harness and shoes. The shoes were pegged together with dogwood pegs. ⁽⁴⁰⁾ The Horton family furnished five sons for the Confederate cause. The youngest soldier was only sixteen when he entered the army. None of the boys were outstanding but were just among the ranks. After the war, the farm was inherited by the children. Today most of the land of the original plantation of the Hortons is owned by members of the family. Only one slave stayed with Rufus Horton after the war. That was old Uncle Bob Horton who after the war stayed on for twenty years. Then he moved to Shelby and worked at Shelby Iron Works until his death. ⁽⁴¹⁾

By 1852 there was a deep hatred of the Yankees in Shelby County. There was determination by the people to destroy or force out of the county all Yankee and Yankee supporters. "It is reported that Mr. Butler (a member of Lyman Business) is an abolitionist and all sorts of talk that could be made and efforts to pull down the business. There is talk of trying to get a law passed to do away with the cotton yards in town. Our people's being the only one that is permanently fitted up. The pretense used is the danger of fire. I cannot tell whether they will injure our fires or themselves most. Our Southern clerks, they call fugitives." ⁽⁴²⁾

(40) Oliver Horton - Columbiana

(41) Mrs. A. C. Galloway - Montevallo

(42) Lyman Paper Notes - Miss Mary McWilliams

1852 was a year of hard times in Alabama. This was partly due to the bad crops of corn and wheat. (Chief crops besides cotton were wheat, corn, oats and other grains.) Everything looked as if things might be better the next year. Says Henry Lyman, "I travel 25 to 40 miles on horseback every day. I spend most of my time collecting and trying to collect. This will be my business until July." (44)

The people of Shelby County knew that if the coming elections went Republican, the Southern States were bound to secede. After the Congressional election, Henry Lyman in a letter to his father-in-law said, "I am disappointed to find the Republican ahead in Connecticut. It is surely a bad egg, but the Democrats have gained ground on them so fast I trust everything will come right by the time of the presidential election." Everything didn't come out all right and the Republicans in 1860 elected Lincoln. Before the election, Yancey spoke in Montevallo, hurling terror at those who opposed his ideas. (45)

When the Secession Convention of Alabama was called, John McClanahan and George Shortridge were sent as delegates by Shelby County. They voted for and supported the Ordinance of Secession.

At the Declaration of War, Shelby like all other counties (or most of them) rose to the cause. All over the county young men were leaving plantations and other works to enlist in the Confederate Army. At Montevallo in the famous Walnut Grove was organized Captain Rufus W. Cobb's Company "C". From their grove Alabama's Sixteenth Regiment went to Montgomery. Ten thousand people packed the grove to bid farewell to the soldiers. Captain Jobe T. Wilson another man from Montevallo, enlisted in the famous Confederate Company known as the "Cahaba Valley Boys" which became the first company of the Tenth Alabama Infantry and served in Northern Virginia. Captain Reynolds commanded a company at Gettysburg and passed through the war without an injury. He surrendered his regiment at Appomattox (43) MacAdams Record - Hortons possession

(44) Lyman Notes

(45) Shelby County papers of Mrs. Meroney .

(46)
Court House. Most of the boys from Shelby County served in the Confederate in the West. They fought with Sidney Johnston, Forrest, Bragg and Hood. In the battles of Vicksburg, Shiloh, Chattanooga, Chickamauga and Atlanta, Shelby County was represented. (47)

Shelby County was not without deserters to the Confederate Cause. The deserters were to be found mostly in the north and northeast part of the county. In September 1864 in the north there were to be found from one to two hundred deserters and in the south there were about seventy-five deserters. Shelby County desertion was caused to a great extent by conditions at home. In 1865 in March there were three hundred women at the plow. The women of Shelby and Bibb were barefoot begging for corn. The deserters were for the most part those men who were conscripted. Fifteen per cent of Shelby County's men were volunteers to the cause.

Shelby, Calhoun, and Bibb were the only counties above the Black Belt who did not send delegates to the Peace Convention. However, the Peace Society was especially strong in the hill counties of Talladega, Shelby and Coosa. (48)

Shelby County's biggest dose of the war was Wilson's Raid. Wilson organized his men at Gravelly Springs. He was thirteen thousand, five hundred strong in man power. The purpose of his raid was to destroy Confederate stores, factories, mines, iron works, etc. He moved his corps in three divisions along three routes. Forrest was sent with a worn out army to oppose. Selma was the main objective to be reached and destroyed. (49) Miss Duffee describes the approach of the army at Montevallo. "It was about sun set when we heard the rolling of many drums and saw waving pennants and banners of war and a seemingly endless column of cavalry approach the town. All night we waited the agony of the dawn,

(46) J. A. MacKnight - Montevallo "A Little Bit of Lombardy", p. 15

(47) MacAdams Records

(48) Martin - Desertion of Alabama Troops, N. Y. 1932, p. 133

(49) Fleming - Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama, N. Y. 1905, p. 71-72

knowing a battle was imminent, as the forces of Forrest, Buford and Roddey were on the southern outskirts. In the forenoon we heard firing and a heavy skirmish began." ⁽⁵⁰⁾ The iron foundry at Montevallo, located where Brown's offices are now, was destroyed as the army pushed its way to Brierfield. Other valuable property was destroyed in Montevallo on March 30th. The iron foundry at Columbiana and other property was destroyed. At Shelby, Shelby Iron Works was destroyed. ⁽⁵¹⁾ Shelby County was left a scene of desolation by Wilson's Raid.

After the war was over, Shelby County was poverty stricken. She had no slaves, no industries, no money, no farm animals and she had little freedom left. Several years were to pass before the freedman started applying himself to his work. Many of the old plantation owners rented their farms in preference to dealing with the new labor system. In 1866 corn sold for two dollars a bushel. People all over the county were poorer than they had ever been. "I do not see how they are to be kept from starvation if corn is not sent from the west very soon." The church after the war was very important. This was about the only gathering the people had. Gone were the carriages and four horses and ⁽⁵²⁾ instead were buggies and surreys. Many of the people did all their traveling walking

Feeling was very strong against the freedmen. Lynchings were common and little discussed. Near Pelham a negro surprised a young woman at a spring. She screamed and the negro tried to escape. The negro was caught and hanged on a tree by the spring. ⁽⁵³⁾

Industrial development was continued with Yankee Capital. In industries, the whites worked rather calmly with the Yankee and negroes but the Southerner refused to meet the Yankee on any social basis.

By the Civil War, Shelby County was turned away from the chance of being an industrial country and instead she is a county of the small farmer and small business man.

(50) Ethel Armes - Story of Iron and Coal in Alabama, p. 200

(51) Anderson - Federal Raid Into Alabama, p. 6-7

(52) Lyman Papers

(53) Mrs. A. C. Galloway

Value of Farm Crops in Shelby County

Cotton
 Corn
 Cattle & Dairy Products
 Sorghum
 Hay
 Oats
 Sweet Potatoes
 Vegetables

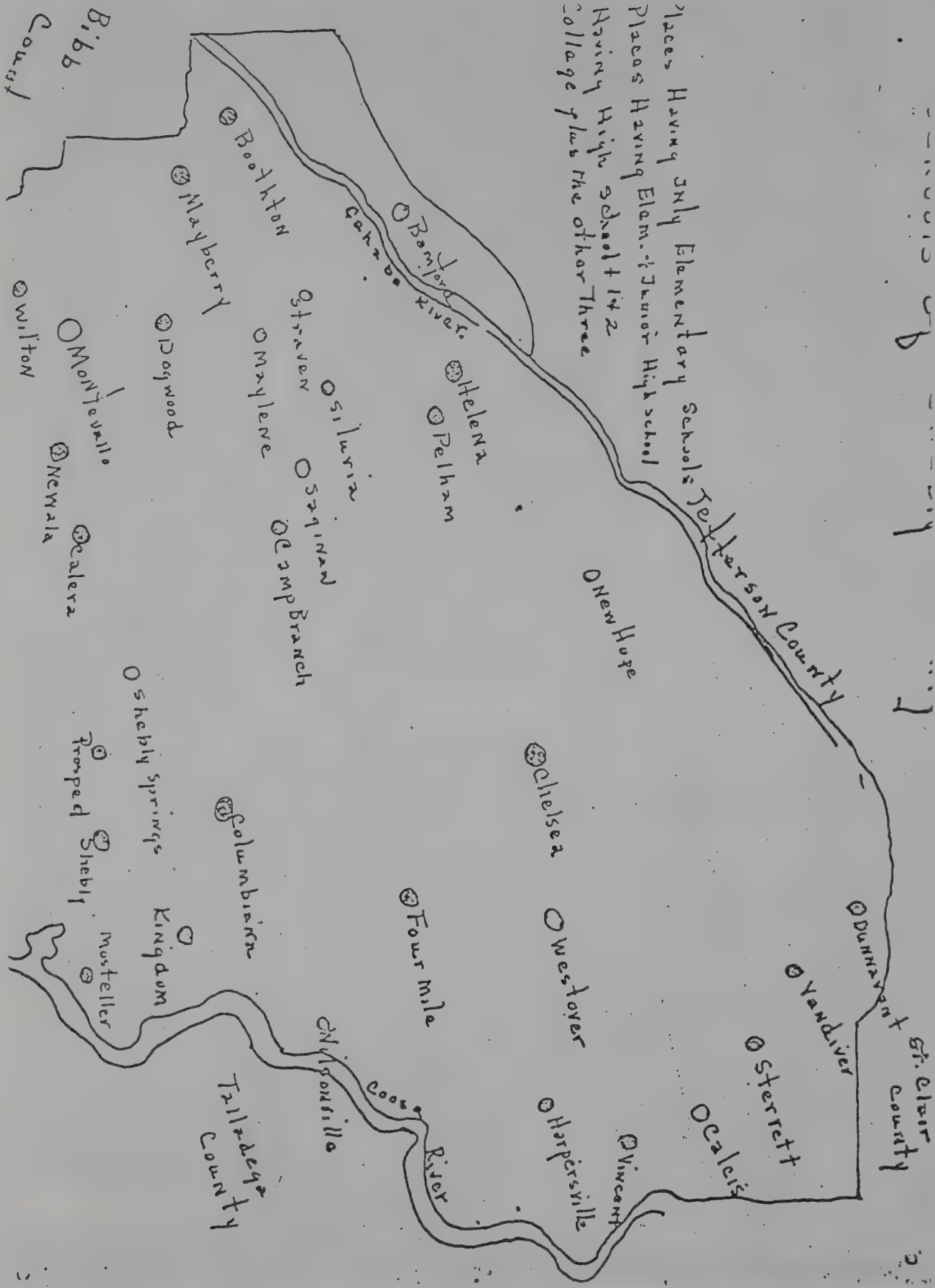
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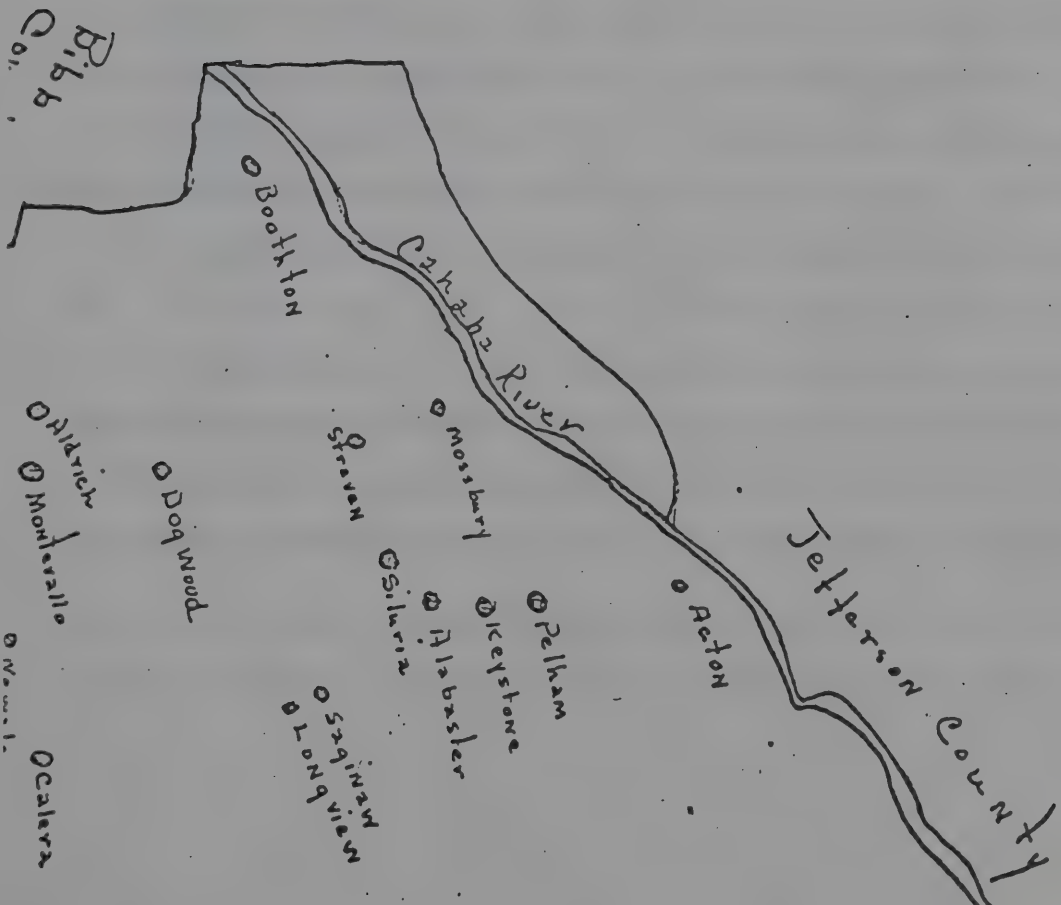
Roads of Shelby County



Places Having Only Elementary Schools
 Places Having Elem. & Junior High School
 Having High School & 142
 College plus the other three



Industrial Activities of Shelby



Biographies

William F. Aldrich, who was president of Montevallo Coal and Transportation Company, came to Alabama in 1874. Mr. Aldrich was a Yankee. He was successful in his coal mining and in establishing a model coal mining town at Aldrich. He and his wife were active in reform work in Shelby County and Alabama. They were always known as friends of their employees and all people who came within their influence.

Ex-Governor R. W. Cobb spent most of his life in Shelby County. In 1868 he removed to Columbiana and later to Helena. In 1872 he was elected state Senator and served until 1878. In 1878 he was elected Governor of Alabama. (54)

Dr. Hallie Farmer is the first woman to ever hold a position on the Council of Montevallo. Dr. Farmer was born and educated in the state of Indiana. In 1927 she came to Montevallo to accept the position of History Professor. She is an outstanding member of Alabama College faculty. In September 1936 she was elected to City Council where she is a very active member. Dr. Farmer's idea for increasing the political power of women is by participation in local government first. Dr. Farmer is state president elect of the American Association of University Women and was chairman of education for the Business and Professional Club for eight years. (55)

Harry Gordon, the Mayor of Columbiana, has been very successful in bringing to Columbiana needed improvement. Under his administration, Columbiana has paved her streets and through the WPA has built a hangar which is used for a recreational center as well. Mr. Gordon has the reputation of being

(54) Memorial Record of Alabama, Vol. I, p. 890-91

(55) Birmingham Post, May 18, 1937

unbeatable in the city elections. He is an earnest supporter of the schools and recreational activities of Columbiana. Mr. Gordon is associated with Mr. John R. White in an insurance and real estate business in Columbiana. ⁽⁵⁶⁾

Edmund King was one of the early settlers of Montevallo. He arrived in Montevallo from Georgia in 1817 and built the famous King Hall. Edmund King was born in 1782. He was married to Nancy Regan of Griffin County, Georgia. After settling in Wilson Hill, King was both a merchant and planter. Many slaves worked on his plantation. King was a deeply religious man taking an active part in the Baptist Church and deeding the land for the erection of the Baptist Church. Mr. Edmund King's hobby was the Industrial School, then being formed. Many orphan or homeless boys found refuge in the King Home and found in Edmund King a friend. ⁽⁵⁷⁾

Horace Ware was born in 1812 in Lynn, Massachusetts, the cradle of the iron industry in North America. His father was Johnson Ware who had built early forges in Bibb County, Alabama. At the age of sixteen, Horace Ware became his father's partner and at the age of twenty bought him out. In 1841 he purchased lands in Shelby and in 1846 had completed his blast furnaces. Mary Harris, one of the earliest women writers of the state, was the second wife of Horace Ware. She said of him, "He was pioneering all his life. I remember, even in driving anywhere he always took the roughest places in the road because, he used to say, nobody else would take them, and they must be smoothed down." In the beginning Mr. Ware had less than one thousand dollars in working capital. Despite his limited means and his never ending embarrassments, he had within

(56) Mr. W. C. Evans - Ramford, Alabama

(57) Historic Homes - Birmingham, Alabama, p. 251

fifteen years established an active manufacturing plant consisting of an eight-ton charcoal blast furnace, a twelve-ton merchant bar rolling mill, cupola and foundry, blacksmith and wood shop and homes for three hundred peoples. In addition he had established a good church and school at Shelby, Alabama. Mr. Horace Ware died in Birmingham in 1890 after sixty years in the iron business. (58)

(58) Ethel Ames - Story of Coal and Iron in Alabama, Birmingham, 1910, p. 76-77

Officials of Shelby County

Leon Walker of Siluria, Alabama is the Probate Judge of Shelby County. This is his first term as Judge. Mr. Walker is a successful business man of his community. Prior to his election Mr. Walker had not held office in Shelby County. He is a member of the Methodist Church, a Mason, Woodman and a Red Man. He is affiliated with the Democratic party.

Claude Fore is sheriff of the county. He has been a resident of Shelby County since 1924. For several years Mr. Fore was constable of Montevallo. In 1934 he was elected to the position of sheriff.

Luther Fowler was elected Tax Collector of Shelby County in 1934. Mr. Fowler was at one time a member of the faculty of Alabama College. He has been editor of several weekly newspapers. His latest paper published in Columbiana is The Shelby County Reporter. He is a member of the Democratic party.

Clarence Abbott is a native of Shelby County, born at Shelby, Alabama. In 1934 he was elected Tax Assessor. Mr. Abbott had experience in bookkeeping with Shelby Iron works and has served as clerk in both the Tax Collector and Assessor's offices. He is a Baptist, Mason and a staunch Democrat.

James Lamar Appleton, Superintendent of Education in Shelby County, is well equipped to fill this position. He graduated from the University of Alabama in 1917. During the World War he served in the army. For many years he taught in the schools of DeKalb and Shelby County. He was principal of Montevallo High School. Mr. Appleton was appointed to fill the vacancy left by the death of Mr. J. W. Letson and in the next election he was elected by the Democrats as the Superintendent of Education.

A. A. Lauderdale, the County Farm Agent, was educated at Auburn. In 1923 Mr. Lauderdale became Farm Agent of this county. He has been a guiding hand to the farmers in their needs. His is especially interested in raising better poultry, improving dairying and live stock, and in feeding problems. He is a Democrat.

John Madison Lyon, chairman of the Board of Revenue, is a native of Shelby County. He has spent most of his life near Columbiana as a successful farmer. Mr. Lyon is an active and loyal Democrat.

Calvin Weldon, Clerk of the Circuit Court, has had experience in this work before. He had assisted Mr. Taylor when he held this position. Mr. Weldon is from Columbiana and is a Democrat.*

Frank Head, Register of Circuit Court, came to Columbiana in 1932. He is a lawyer and a graduate of the University of Alabama.

L. H. Ellis is the Representative of the county. He was appointed to fill the vacancy left by Mr. Bob Reid's resignation. Mr. Ellis has for years been a successful and outstanding lawyer in Columbiana. He was several years a member of the State Senate. During the last session of legislature, Mr. Ellis was active in supporting bills to aid in raising money to support the schools. Mr. Ellis is interested in all cultural and civic activities of Columbiana and Shelby County as well as political ones.

(59) Shelby County Democrat, September 24, 1936

(60) A. C. Gallaway, Montevallo, Alabama

